



HEALTH ADVISORY #61

INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS (GAS) Disease

TO: West Virginia Healthcare Providers, Local Health Departments, Hospitals and other Healthcare Facilities

FROM: Marian L. Swinker, MD, MPH, Commissioner for Public Health and State Health Officer, WVDHHR, Bureau for Public Health

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LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY HEALTH PROVIDERS, HOSPITAL-BASED PHYSICIANS, INFECTION CONTROL PREVENTIONISTS, LABORATORY DIRECTORS, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

The northern panhandle has reported 8 cases of invasive Group A Streptococcus (GAS) Disease to West Virginia Bureau for Public Health since October, 2011, including 2 cases of invasive GAS in postpartum mothers. GAS often asymptomatically colonizes the throat and skin and results in mild illness such as "strep throat" and impetigo. Rarely GAS may result in bacteremia and other life-threatening infections, termed "invasive GAS disease." Two of the most severe forms of GAS disease are necrotizing fasciitis and streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (STSS). While death occurs in 10%-15% of patients with invasive GAS disease, approximately 25% of necrotizing fasciitis cases and more than 35% of STSS cases result in death. Although invasive GAS infections are not common, an increase cases typically occurs in the winter and early spring in West Virginia.

Additional information can be found at:

http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/IBD_VPD/IBD/Pages/StrepA.aspx

Please report any of the following to your local health department:

- Isolation of GAS (Group A Streptococcus) (*S. pyogenes*) by culture from a normally sterile site (e.g., blood or cerebrospinal fluid [CSF], joint, pleural, or pericardial fluid); and
- Cases of necrotizing fasciitis associated with GAS infection.

For questions contact your local health department or the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 1-800-423-1271 in WV.

This message was directly distributed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health to local health departments and professional associations. Receiving entities are responsible for further disseminating the information to the targeted audiences noted.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance, warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.